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Panjabi

A Comprehensive Grammar

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj



PANJABI

A Comprehensive Grammar

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Mangat Rai Bhardwaj is a native speaker of Panjabi with a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Manchester. He has taught Panjabi, Hindi-Urdu, English and translation and interpreting in colleges and worked as a freelance translator and interpreter.

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Panjabi

A Comprehensive Grammar

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj

First published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Publisher's Note

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Names: Bhardwaj, Mangat Rai, 1946- author.

Title: Panjabi : a comprehensive grammar / Mangat Rai Bhardwaj.

Description: Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, [2016] |

Series: Routledge Comprehensive Grammars | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015042069 | ISBN 9781138793859 (hardback : alk. paper) |

ISBN 9781138793866 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315760803 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Panjabi language--Grammar. | Panjabi language--Spoken Panjabi. | Panjabi language--Textbooks for foreign speakers--English.

Classification: LCC PK2633 .B396 2016 | DDC 491.4/282421--dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015042069>

ISBN: 978-1-138-79385-9 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-79386-6 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-76080-3 (ebk)

Designed, illustrated and typeset in Times, Arial and LokLipi
by Mangat Rai Bhardwaj

श्रीशब्दब्रह्मणे नमः

ਜੇਤਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਤੇਤੀ ਜੇਤਾ ਰੂਪੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਤੇਰੀ।

- Guru Nanak Dev

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

- Alfred Tennyson

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Preface

While anybody is welcome to use/read this book, I had two types of users in mind – (i) fairly advanced learners of the language and (ii) students and professionals in the field of theoretical and “applied” linguistics (such as speech therapy, translation theory, language teaching, first and second language acquisition theory, psycholinguistics etc.) *in this order of priority*. I regard as “fairly advanced” learners those who have successfully gone through my *Colloquial Panjabi* and *Colloquial Panjabi 2* (or similar courses) if they learnt Panjabi as a second/foreign language. A grammar book such as this one is not a primary language learning tool. It is meant to be a *reference* grammar to be used by the fairly advanced learners of a language to *rationally understand and consolidate* their existing competence in order to take it further. If Panjabi is their mother tongue, I regard them as fairly advanced learners/users if they are interested in learning more about the structure of their language for various reasons – for example, studying the language of the holy Sikh scripture after obtaining a better knowledge of the grammatical structure of modern Panjabi, or teaching Panjabi linguistics at the postgraduate level, or teaching Panjabi as a foreign language. So the complexity of the language as used in real life is faced head-on, and not avoided, in this book. Many salient grammatical features of Panjabi, ignored by the past grammarians, are dealt with for the first time in this book. Most chapters of this book have a section “For teachers and other more advanced users” which gives, in an outline form, some more technical information about

the phonological and grammatical structural features of Panjabi. It has been one of the principles of good language pedagogy since remote antiquity that teachers should know much more than they are supposed to teach and should be able to answer the learners' "why" questions in addition to teaching them "how" skills in language comprehension and production. These sections can be skipped by the users not interested in them. (They do not become any *less* advanced by doing so!) However, I am sure that if they get addicted to such technicalities, they will start enjoying them. All such technicalities are fully explained and no previous knowledge of linguistics is assumed. But I must also add that even at other places (especially in the later chapters), this book presents ideas which will challenge many of the pre-conceived notions of many people and jolt them out of their Eurocentric prejudices into fresh thinking about the grammatical structures of other languages. I hope that any serious advanced learners of Panjabi (and other North Indian languages) will welcome them.

Having been an advanced learner of Hindi-Urdu and English as my second and third language respectively, and having been trained as a theoretical linguist, I believe that I understand fairly well what these two types of users of grammar books such as this one generally look for. As my mother tongue, Panjabi is "in my blood" and I have "the native speaker's intuitions" about what the various constructions of the language *really mean* or *tend to mean* in different contexts and situations. I can both *judge* the Panjabi constructions *from outside* as well as *participate* in the process of their genesis and *feel them from inside*.

Grammar books can be placed on a continuum, with the pedagogical ones at the one end and the theoretical ones at the other and the descriptive ones in the middle (Leech 2006: 2). I would like to regard this book as a descriptive grammar looking both ways. Having presented pedagogical grammar of Panjabi (albeit in an outline form) in my books mentioned above, I believe that the fairly advanced learners of Panjabi should be able to move on to a descriptive reference grammar. But no grammar (not even a pedagogical one) can be one hundred percent theory-neutral. The writer of a book such as this one has to make a choice from the traditionally accepted views and terminology and her/his own theoretical views (if she/he *explicitly* holds any). The choice is nearly always some sort of subjective compromise.

I think that it would be appropriate for me to mention my own academic and theoretical background and professional experience here and how I came to develop the views underlying this book. I was trained as a theoretical linguist but I never practised academic linguistics. So I never felt obliged or pressurised to toe the line of any linguist or school of linguistics. All my working life, I worked as a teacher of Panjabi, Hindi-Urdu and English. For about four years (1982–86), I worked as a researcher (or “applied linguist”) on the European Science Foundation Project on Second Language Acquisition by Adult Immigrants. The experience of my interaction with my European colleagues on this project with “universalistic” persuasions and commitments helped me clearly define and consolidate my own thinking as a linguist and learn something extremely valuable – how *not* to analyse and study a language.

Apart from teaching Panjabi, Hindi-Urdu and English, I also taught translation and interpreting in two colleges in the UK. More significantly, I also work as a freelance translator and interpreter in all sorts of situations including civil and criminal courts in the UK.

In linguistics, I am strongly sceptical of “language universals”. A search for these “universals” has been a hallmark of Western thinking from Plato onwards, dominated by the dualism of being and experience, what something really is (or its true being) hidden behind “mere appearances” through which it manifests itself. When European scholars (mostly missionaries, civil servants or army officers) wrote grammars of the languages of the people subjected to European rule, they endeavoured to fit by violence the varieties found in other languages (or “mere appearances”) into the European categories arbitrarily and imperialistically regarded as “language-independent rational and logical categories” existing in some Platonic heaven and imperfectly represented in the languages spoken by the people who were weak enough to become subjected to European rule. This practice has not stopped. Even now some linguists are creating ambitious “language-independent” frameworks of semantic categories (especially spatio-temporal ones) and syntactic frameworks with universalistic ambitions and pretensions. They create their webs of “universal” categories on the basis of the study of a few European languages (mainly English) and then impose them upon other languages with the help of superficial translational equivalences, or by setting up *convenient Euro-centred* “abstract levels”, “deep structures”,

“logical forms”, “underlying forms” (which I love to abbreviate as UFOs!) etc. The latest theoretically respectable attempt, the so-called Chomskyan Revolution in linguistics in the second half of the last century, is essentially a crystallisation of this tradition (with the difference that these “universal” categories now reside in a separate “language organ” or “language module” within the human brain, and not in a Platonic heaven). If we learn any lesson from the fate of such grand theoretical frameworks, it is this: a framework that attempts to accommodate *all* languages ends up by accommodating *no* language. Sands of the history of modern linguistics are littered with the broken remains of many such Ozymandias!

The first article of my grammarian’s faith is that each language developed its present form in order to satisfy its speakers’ socio-cultural needs, and not to fit into a linguist’s ready-made theoretical framework.

For several years, I carefully studied the grammars of Panjabi and Hindi-Urdu written from the 18th century onwards including some written by modern linguists. I took most of their analyses with a pinch of salt. Luckily, “taking with a pinch of salt” is an idiomatic expression, and no physical salt is involved; otherwise I would have swallowed a kilogram of salt (NaCl) by now! There were glaring counter-examples to the “tenses” of Panjabi and Hindi-Urdu they set up. John Beames, an English magistrate in Calcutta, was the first to challenge this practice of setting up “tenses” for North Indian languages in his monumental three-volume *A Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India* (1872–79), but his challenge was simply ignored. Kali Charan Bahl (1964, 1969) also expressed serious doubts about analysing the Panjabi “tense” system in this way, but did not present his own detailed analysis.

A careful study of the Panjabi TMA (Tense Mood Aspect) system and how the Panjabi verb-forms evolved over centuries from Pāṇini onwards (discussed in [Chapter 2](#)) has convinced me that fitting the Panjabi TMA system into the “universal” European categories is the greatest injustice to Panjabi. A study of the view of time in Indian culture and philosophy, as it developed over the past two thousand years, has also convinced me about the hollowness of the claim that the armchair semantic categories based on European languages are universal. William Haas, my first teacher of linguistics in Manchester, UK, was never tired of emphasising the need for asking the right questions. “If you ask wrong questions, you get confusing answers,” he always said. His Goethean way of looking at living things

(Haas 1957) was infectious. My Ph.D. research supervisor N.E. Collinge always encouraged me to ask honest and searching questions, study the ancient Indian linguists and develop my own independent views. I am deeply indebted to both these teachers of mine, as every page of this book shows. A careful study of the past grammars of Panjabi and Hindi-Urdu has convinced me that the European scholars who started this tradition (Beames being a notable exception) started with wrong questions and expectations. A major part of this book is devoted to correcting their mistake.

This grammar book deals with the meaning potential of various types of constructions in Panjabi. Panjabi, like any other language, has some unique features which, I believe, can be of interest to advanced learners of the language as well as to linguists working on a wide variety of languages, especially Indian languages with which Panjabi shares these features. I have highlighted them in the book. During my teaching career, I have frequently met highly motivated and critical learners of Panjabi and Hindi-Urdu. It is my moral duty to present to them what I *honestly* believe are the structural features of Panjabi. I have made no attempt to fit Panjabi forcibly into any theoretical framework, formal or functional or traditional, especially the one about which I have serious doubts. I paint a picture of Panjabi grammar “warts and all” as I see it from my own highly flexible (and frankly *pragmatic*) standpoint, keeping in view my first commitment to writing a pedagogical grammar for language learners. In this book, I have included the results of my own research as well. So it is necessary for me to mention in [Chapter 2](#) my own theoretical views regarding language and linguistics which are shared by the scholars whose views I mention with approval in the book. But this book cannot go into all the technical details useful for professional linguists. If they wish to pursue the subject, they can modify them for themselves. I have full faith in the intellectual competence of *all* the users of this book, linguists and well as advanced learners who wish to explore the language in some depth.

Though Panjabi has certain features (**serial verb constructions**, among others) not found in English and other major European languages, it is nevertheless an Indo-European language. So we can expect Panjabi to share some *structural* features with these languages. A linguist working on Panjabi can benefit from the insights of the linguists working on European languages. I have found two monumental grammars of

English – *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (Quirk *et al.* 1985) and *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) extremely helpful. I learnt some analytical concepts and techniques from the authors of these grammars. But I have always been on my guard against what I call the *Platonising* habit of the past grammarians of Indian languages – regarding categories like **tense**, **passive voice** etc. as well-defined “language-independent” categories existing in some Platonic heaven and incarnating themselves in different languages.

It will be ethnocentric to assume that Panjabi is not rich enough a language to enable a team of dedicated linguists to produce a grammar of around 2000 pages (similar to the two English grammars mentioned above). But, working within my own limitations, I am painfully aware that I am leaving out more than I am including in the book. There are inevitably a number of loose ends and a less than adequate treatment of some important topics. I can only hope that some future grammarian will take the task further from where I leave.

In the field of linguistics, I always welcome good ideals from everywhere. Apart from the scholars (ancient and modern) mentioned in [Chapter 2](#), I was also deeply influenced by the British linguists Firth and Halliday, particularly by the latter’s view of “language as a social semiotic” (Halliday 1978). But I seriously followed only Firth in a paradoxical manner. In his life Firth did not follow anybody. So a real follower of Firth does not follow anybody, not even Firth!

When I started planning this book, I knew that I would be ploughing a lone furrow. I feel envious of the authors of the other grammar books who acknowledge the help they received from other scholars in their fields working in various universities. I have not been so lucky. Over the past forty years (since I decided to enter the field of linguistics) I tried to contact all the Panjabi linguists I had heard of. I received help and encouragement from only one of them – Kali Charan Bahl from the University of Chicago. I am profoundly grateful to him for this. The rest did me a great favour by reinforcing my spirit of fierce independence! Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Bengali in 1905 *Jodi tor dak shune keu na ashe tôle êkla chôlo re* – “If no one responds to your call, then go your own way alone.”

I have made minimum possible use of any published texts for my data. Most of the examples I analyse are actually used by me or I have actually

heard them from native speakers, with the proper stressing of words and intonation, in all sorts of situations. I have also taken some examples from Panjabi nursery rhymes, folk songs and published poetry. I have always been guided by the 5th–6th century Indian linguist Bhaṭṭhari's dictum that a grammarian should deal with a language used in लोकव्यवहार *lokavyavahāra* '(social) activities of the people'. The modern linguist whose thinking is closest to Bhaṭṭhari's is Daniel Everett (2013).

The most inspiring source of data for me are the words, phrases and sentences, along with all their prosodic features, of the stories and nursery rhymes I heard in my childhood (repeatedly, as all children do) from my illiterate mother. They are still fresh in my memory. Panjabi is *literally* my mother tongue! And I present this book as a tribute to my mother's departed soul!

The only linguist who always personally inspired and helped me is my friend Narinder Singh. As with all my past writings, he read every word of this book and offered constructive suggestions. My wife Usha has martyred herself for more than four decades in putting up with all my antics resulting from my chronic absent-mindedness, which becomes a lot worse when I am in the process of writing something. No words can fully express my gratitude for Narinder and Usha.

This book is the outcome of more than four decades of careful observation and analysis of the working of my mother tongue in all sorts of real life situations and of meditation upon the creative use of the language in Panjabi literature from the 15th century onwards, anonymous Panjabi folk songs, folk tales and nursery rhymes and the priceless gems of grammatical and semantic creativity I heard from children struggling to acquire Panjabi as their first language.

It would be ungrateful for me to pretend that I have entirely rejected the good work done by the past Panjabi grammarians, especially those mentioned in [Chapter 1](#). I studied these scholars painstakingly and benefited enormously from them, but I tried my best to avoid (what I think are) their mistakes. I offer no apologies for learning from the practices and the ideas of ancient Indian linguists. As linguists, they were more perceptive, creative and dedicated than many modern ones, and we should be proud of them.

Many speakers of the Western (Pakistani) dialects of Panjabi would have loved the inclusion of Shahmukhi script (used for writing Panjabi in Pakistan) and the coverage of these dialects in the book. Both Shahmukhi

and these dialects are certainly worthy of serious study, but two factors prevented me from doing this – (i) I could not increase the size of the book beyond its present one by bringing in the dialects which are best excluded from a book like this, because this is not a book on Panjabi dialectology; (ii) my own limited means and resources did not allow me to spend a few months doing field work in Pakistan. In East Punjab, a lot of work on the Eastern Panjabi dialects – their specific phonological and grammatical features, typical vocabulary, idioms and usage – has been or is being done in the universities and privately by individuals. But no similar work on the Western dialects of Panjabi done recently by their native speakers in Pakistan has come to my attention. The little work recently done on some of these dialects by Punjabi University Patiala for its *Linguistic Atlas of the Punjab* (1973) is not detailed enough. This book deals with what may be called Modern Standard Panjabi. Many grammars of Modern Standard Arabic (e.g., Ryding (2005) and Alhawary (2011)) have been published. But none of them includes any regional dialects of Arabic such as Egyptian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian and others. Similarly, no recent grammar of Modern Standard Hindi (e.g., Bahl (1967), Kachru (1980) and Agnihotri (2007)) deals with the regional varieties of Hindi such as Rajasthani, Braj Bhasha, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili and others. So it would be unfair to expect this book to cover all the regional dialects of Panjabi and to compare Panjabi with its sister languages such as Hindi-Urdu. I have made it very clear in [Chapter 1](#) which dialects of Panjabi I deal with. But I have pointed out at some places how some significant features of this variety of Panjabi differ from their equivalents in the Western dialects and in the sister language Hindi-Urdu.

The problem of the size again prevented me from including Shahmukhi. Moreover, Panjabi has some rules of grammar involving the Panjabi sounds for which Shahmukhi has no characters. I hope that the phonetic transcript used throughout this book will help those who do not read Gurmukhi. Also, I use a number of diagrams in the book to make my analysis clearer. Some of these diagrams (e.g., in [Chapters 4](#) and [13](#)) have directional arrows. Inclusion of the right to left Shahmukhi in these diagrams would have complicated them unnecessarily without adding any clarity to them. The professional drawing program I used for creating these diagrams does not accept any Arabic Unicode text. So I could not have included any Shahmukhi text in them even if I had wanted to. Some

essential information about Shahmukhi is given in [Chapter 18](#), where the Gurmukhi and the Shahmukhi systems are compared.

I must also express my gratitude to Samantha Vale Noya, the series editor, for her support, encouragement and constructive suggestions regarding the contents, design and layout of the book, which I decided to do myself at home, using my own PC. Ruth Berry, the production editor, and an anonymous copy editor gave useful suggestions which helped me enormously in giving a profesional touch to my amateurish attempt.

While the publication of this book gives me immense satisfaction, I will not claim that it is free from any flaws or that it offers an exhaustive treatment of the subject. I will be grateful to any reader/user/reviewer who offers any constructive suggestions for the improvement of the book.

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Introductory Note

How to use this book

Language learners

This book is primarily meant to be used as a *reference* grammar by the learners of Panjabi at the *intermediate* and *advanced* levels. It will give you a *comprehensive in-depth* knowledge of the phonological system, (Gurmukhi) writing system and grammatical structures of Panjabi. There is a *free* multimedia complementary (or *complimentary*) *Workbook and Reader* downloadable from the publisher's website. Details can be found at the back of the cover of this book. This *Workbook* will give you plenty of practice materials (audio-recorded as well as printed) to practise and refine your linguistic skills in Panjabi.

Read and try to digest the information given in each chapter and appendix of this grammar book even if you find it challenging and different from what you expect from a grammar book as a result of your experience with the grammars of European languages. Although Panjabi is an Indo-European language, it is different from European languages in some significant ways. This complexity *is* there in Punjabi and cannot be ignored or wished away by any serious and responsible teacher and learner of this language at an advanced level. Learning a foreign language at an advanced level is a challenging task requiring a lot of patience and hard work. But everything is explained in depth and with examples and no previous knowledge of linguistics is assumed. There is also a Glossary of technical terms to help the users.

The theoretical framework of Panjabi grammar developed by me for my books *Colloquial Panjabi* (1995/2012) and *Colloquial Punjabi 2* (2013) is elaborated and presented in greater detail and depth in this book. Each chapter heading indicates the subject it deals with. The general Subject Index lists all the details of these subjects, topics and sub-topics. A separate Index of Grammatical Words is also there to help the learner locate the pages dealing with each of these words. The technical terms of grammar and the abbreviations used in the book are briefly explained in the Glossary of Technical Terms and Abbreviations, where the numbers of the chapters dealing with these terms and concepts in full detail are given. Learners are advised to use both the Indexes and the Glossary.

The *Workbook*, which presents, briefly analyses and comments on some longer Panjabi texts used in *real life*, will demonstrate that *all* the technical details very carefully included in the system set up for Panjabi in this book (such as the **phases of the verb**, **synthetic case forms**, **serial verb constructions**, role of flexible **word order**, **particles** and **intonation** in creating **cohesion** in text and discourse), completely overlooked by the past Panjabi grammarians, are needed for an explanation of the phonetic, phonological, grammatical and semantic structure of this language.

Linguists

Since not much is known to theoretical and “applied” linguists about Panjabi, which is a major world language, this book may be of interest to them. Panjabi, like Bengali, has some unique and interesting features. But, living in the shadow of their big sister Hindi-Urdu, they do not attract as much attention as they deserve.

My theoretical and philosophical views are described in [Chapter 2](#). My approach is eclectic and pragmatic. I have borrowed ideas from a number of linguists, including ancient Indian linguists. But I have tried to create (what I think is) a *suitable* theoretical framework for Panjabi, instead of fitting it into an existing one. *I believe that while every language shares a few features with some other languages, it is ultimately unique and its individuality should be respected.* The “one size fits all” ideal, however desirable theoretically, does not suit a book of this type. For the benefit of those who do not know the Panjabi (Gurmukhi) script, every Panjabi word and sentence used in this book is also given in the phonetic transcription originally developed in the 19th century for Sanskrit.

Notational and Typographical Conventions

˘	Low tone, e.g., [kòṛā] [[kòṛa]
˙	High tone, e.g., [kóṛā] [kóṛa]
ˈ	Stressed syllable, e.g., [ˈkoṛā] [ˈkoṛa]
ˌ	Syllable boundary, e.g., [ko.ṛā] [ko.ṛa]
̃	Nasalised vowel, e.g., [kã] [kã]
→	“becomes”
*	Ungrammatical or unacceptable expression
(?)	Expression which sounds odd
Ø	Zero realisation of a linguistic element
◀	Anaphoric (backward-looking) expression
▶	Cataphoric (forward-looking) expression

Body text	Serif font
English translation	‘Serif font within single quotes’
Quoted words	“Serif font within double quotes”
Emphasised words	<i>Serif font italic</i>
Words with extra emphasis	<i>Serif font bold italic</i>

Transliteration of Sanskrit words	<i>Serif font italic with additions, e.g., aṣṭādhyāyī</i>
Technical terms of grammar (where highlighted)	Serif font bold
Relational syntactic terms	SERIF FONT ALL CAPITALS, e.g., SUBJECT, PREDICATOR, OBJECT, ADJUNCT
Section headings	Sans Serif font bold
Panjabi phonetic transcription	Sans Serif font bold with additions, e.g., gʰālā
Pronunciation of Panjabi words	[Sans Serif font in square brackets] e.g., [kahāṇī]
IPA transcription	[IPA Serif font in square brackets] e.g., [pəɳdʒabi]
Abbreviations used in glosses	Sans Serif font small size
Panjabi words	Gurmukhi font ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ Shahmukhi font شاه مُکھی
Sanskrit and Hindi words	Devanagari font देवनागरी

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the grammar chapters, especially to write the glosses underneath the examples to save space.

The grammatical terms and concepts these abbreviations stand for are briefly explained in the Glossary and in detail in the chapter where each concept or term is introduced for the first time. Refer to the Glossary first, as this gives the chapter number where the grammatical concept is dealt with in detail. The Subject Index shows all the pages dealing with the concept or subject.

Adj	Adjective	Def	Definite
ADJCT	Adjunct	Deff1	Derived free form 1
AdjPh	Adjective phrase	Deff2	Derived free form 2
AdPh	Additive phase of the verb	Dem	Demonstrative pronoun
Adv	Adverb	Det	Determiner
AdvP	Adverb phrase	Dir	Direct form
Agt	Agentive post-position əne	Expr	Experiencer
Aux	Auxiliary verb	Fem	Feminine gender
COMP(O)	Object complement	Ger	Gerund
COMP(S)	Subject complement	GR	Goal of result
ConjP	Conjunctive participle	ImmAgt	Immediate agent
Co-or	Co-ordinator	ImP	Imperfect participle
Cop	Copula	Imper(P)	Plain imperative

Imper(S)	Suggestive imperative	Pnt	Patient
Inst	Instrumental case form	PotP	Potential participle
IntAgt	Intermediate agent	PP	Postpositional phrase
IntiAgt	Initiator (agent)	Pron	Pronoun
Loc	Locative case form	Rel	Relative clause
Mas	Maculine gender	SA	Substratum of activity
Neu	Neuter verb agreement	Sg	Singular number
NFC	Non-finite clause	SR	Substratum of result
NomC	Nominal subordinate clause	SUB	Subject
NP	Noun phrase	Subo	Subordiantor
OBJ	Object	SubPh	Subtractive phase of the verb
Obl	Oblique form	V	Verb
P	Postposition	V-caus	Causative verb
Part	Participle	V-intr	Intransitive verb
Per	Person	VP	Verb phrase
PerP	Perfect participle	V-tr	Transitive verb
Pl	Plural number		

Part I

General Introduction

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Chapter 1

Panjabi Language, Scripts and Grammar: A Spatio-temporal Perspective

Preview of the chapter

This chapter gives very brief information about the history of Panjabi and the geographical location of the “Panjabi-speaking areas” where the majority of the people speak it as their first language. The Panjabi dialect areas covered in this book are also shown in the maps given below. Some important Panjabi grammars written since 1812 are also briefly reviewed.

According to the latest information available from Ethnologue (in *Wikipedia*) Panjabi stands 10th among the 6700+ languages of the world if we take into account the number of its speakers of Indian and Pakistani origin (about 102 million or 1.44% of the population of the world). Additionally, speakers of this language are found in almost every inhabited part of the globe. There is a joke that “Panjabis and potatoes are found in every part of the world!” Until a few years ago, the largest chunk of the immigrant population (0.5%) in the UK spoke Panjabi. Now they have been overtaken by the speakers of Polish (1%). Among the speakers of the non-official languages in Canada, the largest group (1.3%) are speakers of Panjabi.

1.1 Panjabi – a very brief history

Panjabi is a member of the Indic branch of the large Indo-European family. The following partial family tree shows Panjabi’s immediate cousin and sister languages relevant to what is discussed below.

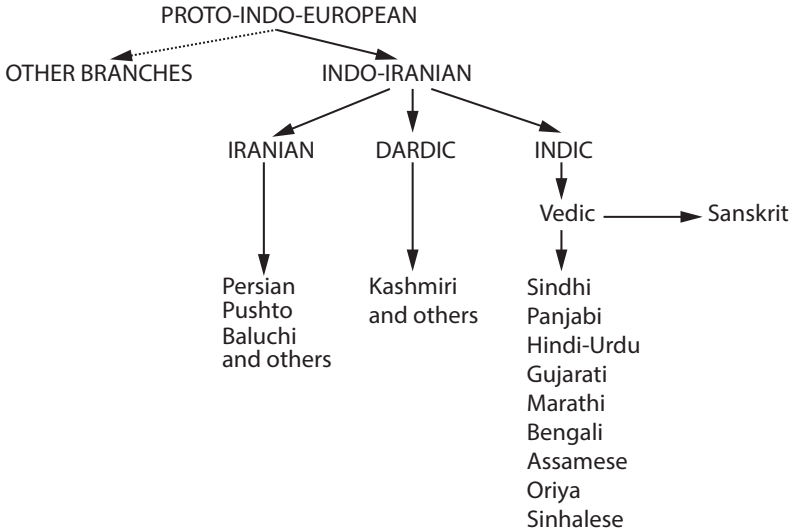


Figure 1.1 A partial family tree of Panjabi and related languages

Figure 1.1 above and Figure 1.4 on p.7 also show some of Panjabi’s cousins of the Iranian and Dardic branches. The oldest recorded language of the Indic branch is Vedic, the language of the Hindu religious books the *Vedas*. The theory of the Aryan invasion of India around 1000 BC is now fully discredited and rejected by historians (Feuerstein, Kak and Frawley 2005, Kazanas 2015). The *Vedas* contain references to the river Sarasvati, which is called a “mighty river”. This river (now known as Ghaggar) dried up around 1900 BC because of tectonic changes. So the time of the *Vedas* has to be pushed back at least a thousand years, if not more. The area where Vedic was spoken was known as Saptasindhu (or the land of seven rivers – now known as Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Satluj and Ghaggar). The great linguist Pāṇini wrote a grammar of later Vedic and since then this language has been known as Sanskrit (‘refined speech’). For many centuries following this, Sanskrit was a language of great literature and books on science, mathematics, politics, philosophy, medicine, surgery and other branches of learning. There still are writers in India who write in Sanskrit. The modern Indic languages are descendants of the language whose “refined” form is Sanskrit. So we have to refer to Sanskrit in order to know the past history of these languages.

Vedic and Sanskrit are collectively known as Old Indic. The Old Indic period is believed to have lasted until 500 BC. The Earlier Middle

Indic period (500 BC–500 AD) is the period of various regional Prākṛit languages, the oldest and best known of which is Pāli, the language of Buddhist literature. Later Prākṛits include Māgadhī, Ardhamāgadhī, Mahārāṣṭrī, Śaurasenī and Paiśachī.

The Later Middle Indic period from 500 AD to 1000 AD is the period of Apabhraṁśa languages. The regional Prākṛits evolved further towards becoming the modern Indic languages. No extensive samples of Śaurasenī and Paiśachī Apabhraṁśa languages have come down to us. The 11th century Muslim poet Addahmāṇ (Abdul Rahman), who lived in Multan (West Punjab), is the last major Apabhraṁśa poet or the first major Panjabi poet (depending on how you look upon his language – it is impossible to draw a precise historical boundary between Middle and Modern Indic.)

Modern Panjabi is believed to have passed through four phases – the First Phase (1000–1400 AD), the Second Phase (1400–1700 AD), the Third Phase (1700–1850 AD) and the Fourth Phase (1850 AD to the present) (Padam: 1954). Fariduddin Ganjshakar (1173–1266) is regarded as a major writer of the First Phase. He is more popularly known as Baba Farid. His poetry is included in the Sikh holy book *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib*. But the authorship of this poetry is disputed. Its language clearly belongs to the Second Phase. Farid lived close to Multan where Addahmāṇ lived a century earlier. But Farid's language is so different from Addahmāṇ's that it does not appear to belong to the 12th–13th century. Many scholars, therefore, argue that the poetry attributed to Fariduddin Ganjshakar was actually authored by the 11th successor of his mission, whose name was Ibrahim Farid. He is also known as Farid Sani (Farid the Second), who died in 1552 in Sirhind (East Punjab). His disciples were spread all over the Punjab and Delhi region. He was greatly respected for his scholarship and saintly character. His language is Lahandi (see below), but there are definite influences of Eastern Panjabi on his language. Guru Nanak Dev, the first Guru of the Sikh faith, once met him. So it is possible that Farid II handed over some of his writings to the Guru. Another possibility is that each generation of Farid I's followers kept altering his poetry to make it intelligible to the common people. So for our purpose the first major Panjabi writer is Guru Nanak Dev (1469–1539). Guru Nanak Dev's language is considerably influenced by Sadhu Bhasha or Sant Bhasha, a variety of Hindi used by the Hindu saints in North India. He probably deliberately chose this influence because he wanted to reach more people

in the Hindi-speaking areas as well, where he travelled extensively. But its roots lie in the variety of Panjabi which was spoken in the area marked as “Panjabi merging into Lahandi” in [Figures 1.4 and 1.5](#) on p.7. The Apabhramśa elements are also quite prominent in his language.

1.2 The “Panjabi-speaking” areas

“Panjabi” means the language of the geographical region known as Panjab or Punjab. This Persian word means ‘a land of five rivers’ (Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Satluj). The name of the region was well-established by the 14th century because it is mentioned in the travelogue of the Moroccan traveller Ibn Batuta, who visited India in the 14th century. But Panjabi is still spoken all over the older Saptasindhu area and beyond. The following maps show the areas where the majority of the population “officially” speaks Panjabi as their first language.



Figure 1.2 An overview of the Panjabi-speaking areas in India and Pakistan

[Figure 1.5](#) also shows the principal towns and cities in the areas where the Panjabi dialects studied in this book (Majhi, Doabi, Puwadhi and Malwai) are spoken.

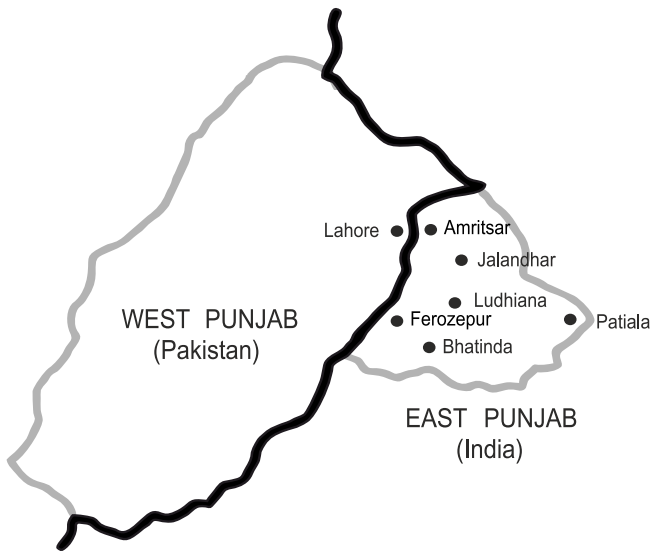


Figure 1.3 Detailed map of the Panjabi-speaking areas in India and Pakistan

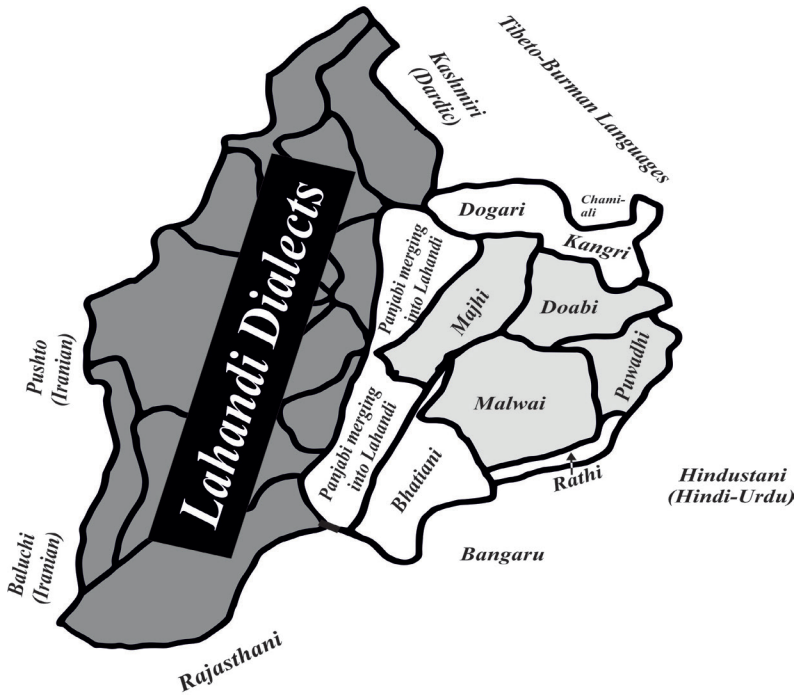


Figure 1.4 Areas where Eastern Panjabi and Western Panjabi (Lahandi) dialects are spoken

It should be noted that the *Vedas* were composed in the Saptasindhu area. Pāṇini was a native of this area and there is a tradition that he based his Sanskrit grammar on the language he spoke as his mother tongue. Even today, Panjabi, especially the Western variety (Lahandi) is grammatically the most conservative of the modern Indic languages and is grammatically closest to Sanskrit. Some scholars quite justifiably regard Vedic as the earliest recorded form of Panjabi.

The exact number of the Panjabi dialects is, and will always remain, a matter of controversy. But what is not controversial is that the Panjabi dialects can be divided into two major groups, Eastern Panjabi and Western Panjabi (or Lahandi) as shown in Figure 1.4. This map also shows the neighbouring areas where non-Indic languages of the Iranian and Dardic families are spoken. Figure 1.5 below shows the principal town or towns in each dialect area. The areas shaded in this map are the areas whose dialects are covered in this book.

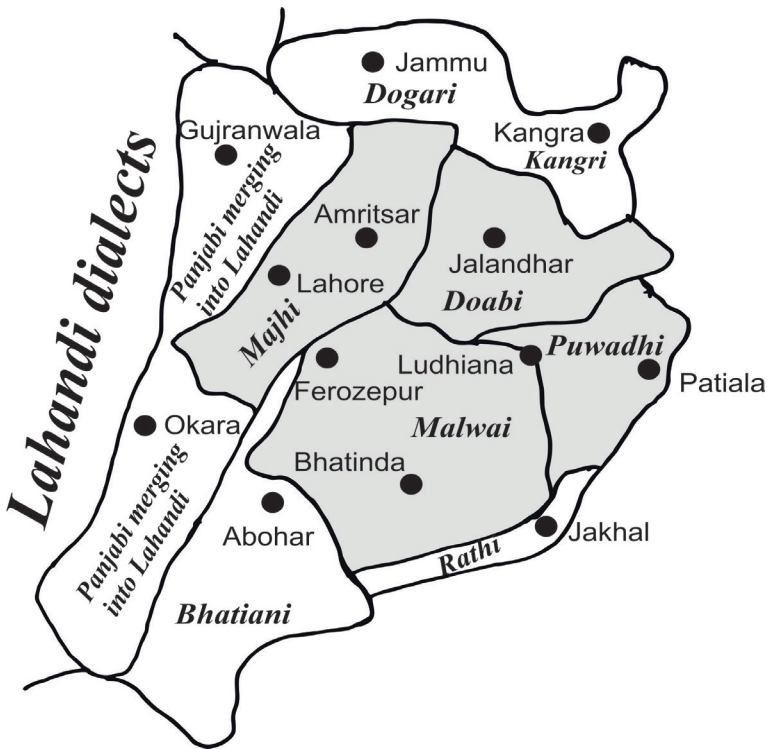


Figure 1.5 Areas (shaded) of Eastern Panjabi dialects dealt with in this book

A *disclaimer* is made here – that these maps are intended to give a *very rough*, and not cartographically accurate, pictures of the geographical location of these areas and that the language boundaries shown here are approximate and are *not political boundaries*. These maps are based on Sir George Grierson’s monumental *The Linguistic Survey of India* (1894–1927) (Vol. VIII Part 1 and Vol. IX Part 1).

Most Indian (especially Panjabi) scholars do not agree with Grierson, in regarding Lahandi as a separate language. (He used the name Lahanda, which was corrected by Indian linguists because Lahanda is a masculine word and a language is feminine in Panjabi.) Whether the language spoken in an area is a dialect of a language or an independent language is rarely a purely linguistic question because questions of politics and cultural and religious identity etc. are invariably involved in this part of the world. But the reason given by Grierson can be easily rejected. Grierson says:

I explained that the whole Panjab was the meeting ground of two distinct forms of speech, *viz.*, the old Outer language strongly influenced by Dardic, if not actually Dardic, which expanded from the Indus Valley eastwards, and the old Midland language, the parent of modern Western Hindī, which expanded from the Jamna Valley westwards. In the Panjab these overlapped. In the Eastern Panjab the wave of Dardic with old Lahandā had nearly exhausted itself, and the old Western Hindī had the mastery, the resultant language being Pañjābī, while in the Western Panjab the old Western Hindī had nearly exhausted itself, the resultant language being modern Lahandā. It is impossible to draw any clear dividing line between Pañjābī and Lahandā...

(Vol 1, 1916: 608)

Grierson adds that

... It thus happens that, although in India we continually see two neighbouring languages gradually merging into each other, nowhere is the process so gradual as in the case of Pañjābī and Lahandā.

(*ibid.*)

So he had to admit that “I have been guided mainly by vocabulary.” (*ibid.*).

But he does not give any sample of the “vocabulary” in order to support his argument. His admission that “It is impossible to draw any clear dividing line between Pañjābī and Lahandā...” is significant. Jodh Singh, a Panjabi scholar and native speaker of Lahandī, says, “A speaker of Lahandī reading every single word in Mr Grierson’s Kashmiri

Dictionary finds no proof of his claim... If we exclude the Arabic and Persian words from that dictionary, at least I cannot understand anything, and I am a speaker of Lahandī... If we compare [Lahandī with] Panjabi, we find that eighty or ninety percent of the words are shared by them. A speaker of Lahandī speaking to a speaker of Panjabi feels that the main difference between the languages is that of style” (1959: iii. Translated from Panjabi).

In the absence of any supporting evidence, Grierson’s view must be regarded as pure speculation. Lahandi is an Indic language, which is neither Dardic nor strongly influenced by Dardic. Being “guided mainly by vocabulary” is an outdated and questionable “philological” practice which no modern linguist can take seriously. About 60% of Modern English vocabulary comes from Latin and French and less than 30% of it is of native Germanic origin. So a person “guided mainly by vocabulary” and ignorant of the history of English might conclude that English is a Romance language like French, Italian and Spanish. The actual DNA (using a slightly inexact analogy about a language) of a language is judged from its verb system and case-marking, particularly that of pronouns. Languages borrow vocabulary (mainly nouns, adjectives and adverbs) from other languages. Careful speakers can maintain the original grammatical markers on the borrowed words for some time before the native tendencies get an upper hand. Grammatical markers of TMA (Tense Mood Aspect) categories on the verb, auxiliary verbs and pronouns and their inflections are seldom borrowed. A careful study of Lahandi grammar can trace back almost all such grammatical features to Sanskrit. This cannot be attempted in this book. Some hints can be found in Duni Chandra (1959), Sekhon (1961) and Padam (1954).

But, taking a clue from Grierson, we can *speculate* better that Lahandi and Eastern Panjabi may be descendants of different and neighbouring Apabhraṃśas. Paisāchī Apabhraṃśa was spoken in what is now the Lahandi area, and Śaurasenī Apabhraṃśa was spoken in the modern Western Hindi area. In the area of modern East Panjabi Śaurasenī “merged into” Paisāchī. Paisāchī means the speech of the Piśācha people. This derogative name (meaning ‘eaters of raw flesh’) was probably given to these people because they did not observe the food taboos and some other customs of the orthodox Brahmins of the Ganga-Yamuna plains.

The linguists who prepared the *Linguistic Atlas of the Punjab* (1973) carefully studied the dialects of Panjabi spoken at more than twenty

places in the Panjabi/Lahandi-speaking areas and beyond. They got a Panjabi folk tale (the story of the Panjabi saint Pūran Bhagat) translated into the dialects spoken at these places, including the Lahandi dialects spoken in Rawalpindi, Dhudial, Talagang, Mianwali, Sargodha, Jhang and Shujabad. These translations and the speech of the people from these areas confirm Jodh Singh's views given above. Grammatically, Eastern Panjabi is a lot closer to Lahandi than, for example, to the neighbouring Indic language Hindi-Urdu. Some Sanskrit case markers on nouns and pronouns and some Sanskrit markers on the verb such as those for TMA (Tense Mood Aspect) and passive voice are better preserved in Lahandi and (to a smaller extent) in Eastern Panjabi than in the other modern Indic languages. Some of these features are discussed in the following chapters. The main difference between Eastern Panjabi and Lahandi is that the latter has preserved the breathy voiced consonants which Eastern Panjabi has lost. (See [Chapter 3](#).)

Interactions between and mixing of the speakers of Eastern Panjabi and Lahandi have been going on for centuries. A lot of fine Panjabi literature was written in Lahandi, such as the writings of Farid Ganjshakar (or probably of Ibrahim Farid), Sultan Bahu, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, Khwaja Ghulam Farid and others. The language used by Guru Nanak Dev, Shah Husain and some other Panjabi poets is heavily influenced by Lahandi. Guru Arjan Dev (the fifth Guru of the Sikh faith, a speaker of Eastern Panjabi) wrote in pure Lahandi as well. Some of the prominent modern writers who wrote in Eastern Panjabi were native speakers of Lahandi. Two relatively recent examples of the migration of the speakers from one area to the other can be given. Towards the close of the 19th century, with the spreading of a canal network in West Punjab, thousands of farmers from East Punjab bought farms in West Punjab. The partition of India in 1947 brought tens of thousands of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab to East Punjab.

As pointed out earlier, the issue of dividing Panjabi into dialects and whether the western dialects are the dialects of Panjabi or belong to a separate Lahandi language is not a purely linguistic question. Political, social and emotive issues are also involved. Most native speakers of both the eastern and the western dialects of Panjabi believe that they speak the same language. We have already quoted Jodh Singh (a native speaker of Lahandi) above. Duni Chandra (1959), another native speaker of Lahandi, believed the same. Both were fine linguists. The fact that

they wrote in Panjabi, and not in English, is no disqualification. Their intuitions should be respected more than the supposedly “objective” views of the non-native linguists. *All* linguists (including the author of this book) have their theoretical biases, various other prejudices and even personal likes and dislikes. Pure “objectivity” claimed by/for linguists is highly exaggerated. There can be no guarantee that the linguists who worked on Panjabi dialects later should be more reliable and free from any personal prejudices and political or ideological motivation. We can disagree with Grierson’s view that Lahandi is a separate language and still agree with his division of Panjabi/Lahandi into regional dialects. There is no controversy anywhere regarding the Panjabi dialects dealt with in this book. (See [Figures 1.4](#) and [1.5](#)). This should be enough for our purpose. However, readers interested in knowing more are referred to Masica (1993) and the linguists mentioned therein.

This book deals with the four eastern dialects of Panjabi – Majhi, Doabi, Malwai and Puwadhi. They are very similar and are collectively known as ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ **kendrī panjābī** or ‘Central Panjabi’. This variety of Panjabi has now become the dominant variety used in Panjabi literature and newspapers and on radio and TV inside and outside the Panjabi-speaking areas. The term ਟਕਸਾਲੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ **ṭaksālī panjābī** ‘standard Panjabi’ is avoided here because that would imply that the other dialects are non-standard or sub-standard. All the speakers of the other dialects including Lahandi understand this variety and *vice versa*.

1.3 The Panjabi scripts

For historical reasons, since the closing decades of the 19th century, the communal harmony in the Panjabi-speaking area has been severely disturbed by the division of the Panjabi-speaking people on religious grounds. Each religious group chose a language and a script as a part of its identity: Sikhs chose Panjabi in the Gurmukhi script, Muslims chose Urdu in the Perso-Arabic script and Hindus chose Hindi in the Devanagari script, notwithstanding the fact that they all spoke Panjabi. Most Hindus in East Punjab have now accepted Panjabi and Gurmukhi, and some major Panjabi writers are Hindus. But the situation has not changed in West Punjab (Pakistan). While India has recognised twenty-three official languages, Pakistan’s “national” language is Urdu spoken by about 5% of its population that migrated from India in 1947. While it makes sense to

use only one script (the Perso-Arabic script) for all the languages spoken in Pakistan, giving no official status to Panjabi spoken by the largest chunk of the population is a different matter.

1.3.1 *Shahmukhi*

Shahmukhi (the name given recently to the Perso-Arabic script when used for writing Panjabi in Pakistan), because of its Arabic origin, appeals to the religious sentiments of the Panjabi-speaking Muslims, and Gurmukhi appeals to Sikh sentiments because it is used in their holy book *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib*. An unbiased historical and structural analysis of both these scripts is given below to dispel certain myths that either of the scripts is “better” than the other for writing Panjabi, especially the myth that Gurmukhi was created by Guru Angad Dev, the second Guru of the Sikh faith. Another myth that Panjabi (written in Gurmukhi) is a “phonetic” language in which “you write as you speak and speak as you write” is the subject of [Chapters 3](#) and [4](#).

[Chapter 18](#) deals with some salient features of Shahmukhi in some detail, but a very brief introduction can be included here. The name Shahmukhi was coined on the analogy of Gurmukhi. The Arabic script designed for a Semitic language was used for writing the Indo-European language Persian. The speakers of Persian could not pronounce some Arabic sounds. So they pronounced two distinct Arabic sounds as [t], three Arabic sounds as [s], four Arabic sounds as [z] and two Arabic sounds as [h]. They added four letters for the Persian sounds not found in Arabic. With the establishment of Muslim rule in India, the ruling class chose the Persianised version of the Arabic script for writing the language spoken in and around Delhi, which they called by different names. But the name Urdu (the Turkish name for an army camp) ultimately prevailed. They added three letters for the retroflex sounds. For writing the aspirated sounds, they started combining **آ** with a letter. They did not create any letter for the retroflex nasal sound [ŋ], ostensibly because this sound was not significant in their variety of Urdu. But, as argued in [Chapter 18](#), the *real* reason was different. Leaving Urdu aside, [ŋ] is a prominent and very significant Panjabi sound and Shahmukhi has no letter for it. None of the half a dozen digital Urdu fonts created in India and Pakistan has a symbol for this sound. Hundreds of Arabic and Persian words used in Urdu and Panjabi have their original spelling but Indian pronunciation. The result

is that the Shahmukhi script has four letters for [z], three letters for [s], two letters for [t], two letters for [h] and no letters for [ŋ]. Some writers use the Unicode symbol 0768 ڙ for [ŋ], but this is not a standard practice. Most Panjabi writers writing in Shahmukhi are carrying on without any letter for this sound. Another symbol for this sound is given and discussed below. Leaving short vowels unmarked in writing is an ancient Arabic practice carried on in Persian, Urdu and Shahmukhi writing. So, on the whole, Shahmukhi is 100% Urdu script with the Urdu writing conventions carried on *in toto* into the writing of Panjabi, even where the pronunciation of the words shared by the two languages is different in Panjabi. No attempt has been made to standardise the spellings of Panjabi words in Shahmukhi. A dictionary of standardised spellings of Panjabi words in Gurmukhi known as ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ-ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ-ਜੋੜ ਕੋਸ਼ **panjābī śabad-rūp te śabad-jor koś** (A dictionary of the forms and spellings of Panjabi words) was published in 1988. No comparable dictionary has been published for Panjabi written in Shahmukhi.

A comparison with the Sindhi script is made in [Chapter 18](#), where it is mentioned that when the script based on the Arabic script was created for Sindhi by Sir Richard Francis Burton (with the help of Sindhi scholars), in the 19th century, special letters were provided for *all* the specific Sindhi sounds as well as for the sounds in the words borrowed from Arabic and Persian. This script has sixty-nine characters: thirty-seven consonants, ten independent vowels, nine vowel signs, three miscellaneous signs and ten digits. The Shahmukhi script, too, needs a similar overhaul.

1.3.2 Gurmukhi

The (mis)interpretation of the name Gurmukhi by some Sikh scholars (and the list includes some respected names) and the popular belief that Guru Angad Dev (the second Guru of the Sikh faith) “invented” this script has done great disservice to the script by putting off many Muslims and Hindus. The traditional interpretation ‘from the Guru’s mouth’ does not make any sense because a script is not related to the mouth. Many serious Sikh scholars (e.g. Padam 1954 and Sidhu 2004) argue that the name Gurmukhi comes from the Panjabi word ਗੁਰਮੁਖ **gurmukh**ⁿ (meaning ‘guru-oriented’ or ‘pious’ and now used mostly for a devout Sikh). So Gurmukhi was the script used by Gurmukh (pious) Sikhs even when the Perso-Arabic script was fashionable in the area. Even the word ਗੁਰਮੁਖ

gurmukh^h is older than Sikhism and is found in the writings of the ascetic Hindu saints (known as the Siddhs or Naths) who predate Guru Nanak Dev (1469–1539), the first Guru of the Sikh faith (Sidhu 2004). Guru Angad Dev did not “invent” this script. His original name was Lehna and he lived with Guru Nanak Dev for several years before he assumed Guruship in 1539. All the traditional thirty-five letters and other symbols used in Gurmukhi already existed (G.B. Singh 1950). They are mentioned by Guru Nanak Dev in a hymn in *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib* p. 432), probably written many years before he met Lehna, who became Guru Angad Dev later. He uses the names of the letters which are still used today (but also see [Chapter 3](#)). The Guru’s earliest biography written around 1634 (published in Kirpal Singh 1969) says that the priest of his village taught him this alphabet when he was seven years old (i.e., in 1476). Gurmukhi belongs to the north-western branch of the Brahmi family. Brahmi was well-established in India by 500 BC, and modern Indian scholars claim that it developed from the Indus valley script and is not Semitic in origin. Some scripts of this family like Landa, Sharda, Bhatt Achhari and Siddh Matrika were in use in the Punjab and its neighbouring areas. In Guru Nanak Dev’s times, two types of scripts were in use in the area where he was born – ਪਟੀ **paṭī** or ਪੈਂਤੀ **paintī** (with thirty-five letters) and ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖਰੀ **bāvan ak^harī** (with fifty-two letters, used for writing Sanskrit). A consonant letter in a script of the Brahmi family represents the syllable consisting of consonant+**a**. The Sanskrit word for this is *akṣara*, which was pronounced as ਅਖਰ **ak^har** or ਅਛਰ **ac^har** in Guru Nanak Dev’s times. The modern pronunciation is ਐਖਰ **akk^har**. What Guru Angad Dev did (most probably under Guru Nanak Dev’s guidance) was the refinement and standardisation of the script and Panjabi spelling for writing Guru Nanak Dev’s writings. It is also believed that he wrote primers for the teaching and propagation of this script. The name Gurmukhi was probably given later to the script. The earlier script that Gurmukhi comes closest to is Siddh Matrika.

Guru Nanak Dev knew the Perso-Arabic script (and Persian and Arabic languages) well. But he favoured a Brahmi-based script apparently for three reasons. The Perso-Arabic script has a baggage of consonant symbols not needed for Panjabi. (For the same reason he did not choose ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖਰੀ **bāvan ak^harī**.) The grammatical importance and correct pronunciation of short vowels (particularly at the end of some nouns and verbs) is extremely important for the correct interpretation

of his poetry (Sahib Singh 1935, Randhir Singh 1954, Harkirat Singh 2011, Bhardwaj 2013). Leaving out short vowels in writing in the Perso-Arabic script is an ancient tradition, and he probably feared that later generations might do the same to his writings if he wrote in the Perso-Arabic script. This has been done frequently in transliterating Gurbani into the script now known as Shahmukhi. Last (or perhaps first) of all, he was a thoroughgoing nationalist. He fearlessly described in great detail how the Muslim invader Babur overran the Punjab area with fire and sword (*Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib* p. 360). He was extremely critical of the Indians who blindly imitated their Muslim rulers' language, mannerisms and customs. (SGGS, pp. 470, 472, 663, 1191). His love for the native Indian traditions extended to the scripts of Indian origin. But he was not against borrowing words from other languages. He also wrote a hymn in Persian as spoken in his times.

Although the Sikh Gurus were nationalists to the core and did not like Panjabis speaking foreign languages and wearing foreign clothes, they borrowed extensively from other languages to enrich Panjabi with synonyms, antonyms and homonyms. According to one estimate at least 6% Arabic and Persian words are in Gurbani.

(Sidhu 2004: 64)

But the main reason why he rejected the Persian script must have been linguistic: he found it *inadequate* for writing the language he was using. The Perso-Arabic (Urdu) script does not have symbols for three important Panjabi sounds represented by the Gurmukhi letters ਙ [ŋ] [ɲ], ਵ [ṽ] [ɳ], and ਞ [ɳ] [ɳ]. ਙ [ŋ] [ɲ] and ਵ [ṽ] [ɳ] have since then become quite marginal as *independent* consonants. (See [section 3.1](#) in [Chapter 3](#).) But ਞ [ɳ] [ɳ] is still one of the most important consonant sounds in Panjabi. Examples of ਙ [ŋ] [ɲ] and ਵ [ṽ] [ɳ] used as independent consonants by Guru Nanak Dev are given below. The page references are to *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib* (SGGS).

ਅੰਡਨੜੇ (580), ਰੰਡਣਿ (722), ਸਿੰਡੀ (886, 907), ਧਿਡਾਣਾ (902), ਮੁੰਢੀ (19), ਵੰਢਣੁ (56), ਸਿਵਾਣੀਐ (58), ਸਿਵਾਧੈ (243)

ਣ [ɳ] [ɳ] is still an important independent consonant in Panjabi for which the Perso-Arabic script (Shahmukhi) has no agreed symbol. A symbol shown in [Figure 1.6](#) was created by a Pakistani writer Jameel Pal in the last decade of the 20th century.

Kirpal Singh Pannu adopted this symbol and created two more. He recently published (free on the Web) a Shahmukhi transliteration of *SGGS*. He created a special Shahmukhi font for this purpose. His transliteration of the words ਰੰਛਣਿ and ਵੰਞਣੁ (on pages 722 and 56 respectively of *SGGS*), breaks the Shahmukhi writing conventions and the words with these symbols will be unrecognisable to a normal reader of Shahmukhi. The words cannot be typed except in Pannu's own special font (not available to this author).



Figure 1.6 Three new Shahmukhi characters used by Pannu

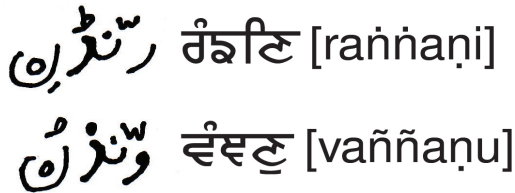


Figure 1.7 Shahmukhi transliteration of two old Panjabi words used by
Guru Nanak Dev

The whole book is full of such examples (involving ਰ [ṛṇ] [ṇ], ਵ [vñ] [ṇ] and ਞ [ṇ] [ṇ]). But the value of his innovation is dubious. As a Sikh, he could not misrepresent his Guru's writing. But the idiosyncratic font and the devices he employed for this purpose will be unintelligible to the target readers. Instead of doing this, he could have borrowed the three symbols (گ , ج and ح respectively) from the well-planned and carefully designed Arabic-based Sindhi script (based on a sound phonological analysis of this Indic language) and included them in his font and typed Guru Nanak Dev's words as shown below. Panjabi and Sindhi are neighbouring languages which share many grammatical features as well.

رڻڻي رڻڻي [raññaṇi]

وڻڻي وڻڻي [vaññaṇu]

Figure 1.8 Transliteration of Guru Nanak Dev's words in the Sindhi script

Thanks to Guru Nanak Dev's choice of Gurmukhi, modern linguists have a good knowledge about the pronunciation and grammar of Old Panjabi, which would have been lost in the Perso-Arabic script.

Another myth regarding Gurmukhi is also prevalent – that in Panjabi written in Gurmukhi, “you speak as you write and write as you speak.” This claim may have been true *to some extent* before the development of tones in Panjabi (Chapter 4), but now this myth is so seriously misleading for learners of language and for linguists studying the phonology of the language that a whole chapter is needed to explode it.

No Panjabi grammar or dictionary published from 1812 onwards used the Perso-Arabic script (now called Shahmukhi) for writing Panjabi. They used either Gurmukhi or phonetic transcription for this. The first text books written by Shardha Ram Phillauri for teaching Panjabi to British civil servants – ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਵਿਖਿਆ **sikkhā̃ de rāj dī vikhīā** (1866) and ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬਾਤ ਚੀਤ **panjabā bāt cīt** (1868) – were in Gurmukhi. Beharee Lal was the first Indian scholar to publish a grammar of Panjabi in 1867, and he, too, used Gurmukhi. For the last two centuries, Panjabi and Gurmukhi have been intimately associated with each other. No serious learner of Panjabi can do without Gurmukhi. Educational institutions in East Punjab have spent billions of rupees to create Panjabi dictionaries and encyclopaedias of idioms, proverbs and folklore in Gurmukhi. ਗੁਰੂਸ਼ਬਦ ਰਤਨਾਕਰ ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ **guruśabad ratnākar mahān koś**, an encyclopaedia of Sikhism by Kahn Singh Nabha (a mine of information about Panjabi history and culture as well) is in Gurmukhi. A number of Panjabi scholars have published grammars of modern and old Panjabi and histories of the language in Gurmukhi. No comparable work has been done in the Pakistani Punjab, where Panjabi is written in Shahmukhi. Instead, the Pakistani government has banned the use of Panjabi in the provincial legislative assembly in favour of its “national” language Urdu.

This unbiased analysis of the historical and political situations concerning the two scripts is not intended to give the impression that either script is better than the other for writing Panjabi *for normal day-to-day use*. Notwithstanding any religious or political considerations, there is no escaping the fact that Gurmukhi was tailor-made for Panjabi (and is used for writing Panjabi only) and Shahmukhi is a variety of the Arabic script imported from outside via Persian and then altered and adjusted for Indian languages.

This book assumes that the *learner* has learnt Panjabi through Gurmukhi (through *Colloquial Panjabi*, *Colloquial Panjabi 2* or similar courses, all of which use Gurmukhi). For the benefit of those who cannot read Gurmukhi (such as linguists using this book and those Panjabis who do not read Gurmukhi), all the Panjabi examples are provided in phonetic transcription as well (and also in IPA where appropriate). Bringing in Shahmukhi would have increased the size (and price) of the book without adding to its usefulness.

All the classical Panjabi literature originally written in the Perso-Arabic script (by Farid, Shah Husain, Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah, Sultan Bahu, Hashim and others) is now available in Gurmukhi as well. Those who are interested in the modern Pakistani Panjabi literature can learn this script (Shahmukhi) from several websites. Or they can learn the script from *Colloquial Urdu* or any other book that teaches Urdu. Shahmukhi is useful for reading the modern Panjabi literature written in Pakistan. But if you wish to study Panjabi grammar in depth and make use of the books about the history and socio-cultural background of the language from a historical perspective (such as the writings of Duni Chandra, Piara Singh Padam, Sant Singh Sekhon, Kahn Singh Nabha, Sahib Singh, Harkirat Singh, Gurbachan Singh Sidhu and others), you have to learn Gurmukhi.

1.4 Panjabi grammar

The first full-fledged Panjabi grammar was published by the Rev. William Carey in 1812. He wrote the book for his fellow missionaries with the explicitly stated purpose of converting Indians to Christianity. Then other missionaries, army officers and civil servants also published utilitarian grammars of Panjabi for the benefit of their colleagues. It would be pointless to list all of them here. It would also be unfair to expect their analyses of the language to be scholarly. But there is one important exception. John Beames, an English magistrate in Calcutta, published his

three-volume *A Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India* (1872–79) in which he analysed the major modern Indic languages (including Panjabi) as a serious linguist. It may be said that he used his legal expertise painstakingly to analyse the structure of these languages (also taking into account the historical development of these languages) and tried to do justice to these languages on the basis of the evidence he found. The Rev. S.H. Kellogg's *A Grammar of the Hindi Language* is one of the books he criticised. But the irony of history is that Kellogg's elegant-looking framework of "tenses" in Hindi proved to be highly influential and was imitated by several later Hindi and Panjabi grammarians (e.g., the Rev. E.P. Newton (1898) and Duni Chandra (1964)), some of whom had no utilitarian motives, often without acknowledging Kellogg as the originator of the framework. Beames's perfectly justified objection to Kellogg's practice of choosing some verb forms or sequences of verb forms as "tenses" and ignoring others, was simply ignored.

Other attempts to set up Panjabi "tenses" on non-Kelloggian lines were also made. In 1888, Major Henry Court published an English translation of Phillauri's ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਵਿਖਿਆ *sikk'hā de rāj dī vik'hīā* and added *A Short Gurmukhi Grammar* to it. Court first sets up two "moods" – Imperative and Indicative. Various Panjabi "tenses" are accommodated in the latter. One of these "tenses" is quite oddly named "future past". T. Grahame Bailey published *Panjabi Grammar: A Brief Grammar of Panjabi as Spoken in the Wazirabad District* in 1904. In 1912, he published (in collaboration with T. Cummings) *Panjabi Manual and Grammar: A Guide to the Colloquial Panjabi*. This book has been reprinted several times and is still available. In his lifetime, Bailey enjoyed the reputation of being able to "speak Panjabi and Urdu better than the native speakers". He uses his own "tense" system for Panjabi, and, like all other European scholars of Panjabi before him, simply ignores the complicated verb sequences found in the language. The Panjabi tense system presented in Jawahir Singh's *A Guide to Panjabi* (1930), designed for teaching Panjabi to English officers, followed Court with a few minor changes. Another Panjabi grammar meant for the non-native speakers is N.I. Tolstaya's *The Panjabi Language: A Descriptive Grammar*, which was originally written for the Russian learner of Panjabi. The English translation of this thin volume of eighty pages was published in 1981.

From the beginning of the 20th century some Sikh and Hindu scholars started feeling seriously the need for teaching Panjabi to their younger

generation. In the state schools, Urdu was the medium of instruction and Panjabi was taught in only some of them as an optional subject. The first major (and voluminous) work on Panjabi grammar was published by Ram Singh in 1924, called ਵੱਡਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ **vaḍḍā panjābī viākaraṇ**. This book remains unmatched in the detailed coverage of all the aspects of the language. Two or three years later, some Panjabi scholars formed a ਵਿਆਕਰਣ ਸੁਧਾਰਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ *Viākaraṇ Sudhārak Kameṭī* (Grammar Reform Committee), which held several meetings and discussed Panjabi grammar in order to “reform” it. After one of these meetings came the final verdict, “After a discussion lasting full three days, the Committee has decided that the Panjabi verbs have three major tenses which can be further subdivided into nine, *and no more*” (Karam Singh 1929: 196. Translated from Panjabi and emphasis added). This “tense system” of Panjabi described and used in Karam Singh’s ਨਵੀਨ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ, ਭਾਗ 3 **navīn panjābī viākaraṇ, bʰāg 3** was literally “designed by a committee”. An account the historical development of Panjabi and its grammar is found in Duni Chandra’s ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ **panjābī bʰāśā dā vikās** (1959) and ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ **panjābī bʰāśā dā viākaraṇ** (1964), in which he follows the Kelloggian tense system with a few minor modifications. More recently, Boota Singh Brar published ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਨ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ **panjābī viākaraṇ sidʰānt ate vihār** (2008) on more modern lines. Ram Singh, Karam Singh, Duni Chandra and Boota Singh Brar wrote their books in Panjabi.

15th–17th century Panjabi is one of the languages used in the Sikh holy book *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Sahib Singh’s ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ **gurbānī viākaraṇ** (1939) and Harkirat Singh’s ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਆਕਰਨ **gurbānī dī bʰāśā te viākaraṇ** (2011) deal with this old variety of Panjabi. These books are indispensable for any grammarian of *modern* Panjabi as well. With the loss of word-final short (lax) vowels, some verb forms have become homophonous but continue to behave in their old ways. They can be (and actually have been) a trap for the unwary grammarian, as [Chapter 11](#) shows.

Some academic linguists who are native speakers of Panjabi also published grammars of Panjabi in English. The first of these books is H.S. Gill’s (written in collaboration with his mentor H.A. Gleason) *A Reference Grammar of Punjabi* (1961/1969). Kali Charan Bahl wrote a thin volume of fewer than one hundred pages, *A Grammatical Sketch of Panjabi* (1964). Gill and Gleason’s book was re-published in India in

1969. This book strictly follows the American Structuralist tradition. This book is important as a pioneering work in this field done by two academic linguists. But a volume of just 160 pages without an index is hardly a “reference” grammar by modern standards.

The most significant Panjabi grammar recently written by a native speaker academic linguist is Tej K. Bhatia’s *Punjabi: A Cognitive-Descriptive Grammar* (1993). This book was published in the series *Lingua Descriptive Studies*, started in 1977, whose aim was to produce grammars of individual languages for cross-language comparison. This book is authoritative, very detailed and *very technical* as well. It is meant exclusively for theoretical linguists and not for language learners. So Bhatia’s book and this book (published by the same publisher) are not meant to compete with but complement each other. Users of this book who want more information can go to Bhatia’s book. But it must be made clear to readers that the theoretical views underlying the analyses of Panjabi presented in the two books differ in some important respects.

For teachers and other more advanced users

This chapter is based on the author’s own research as well as information gathered from many other sources. Interested readers are referred to:

(Duni) Chandra (1959)

(Sir George) Grierson (1894–1927)

(Piara Singh) Padam (1954)

(Sant Singh) Sekhon (1961)

(Gurbachan Singh) Sidhu (2004)

Linguistic Atlas of the Punjab (1973)

and the numerous works cited by Chandra, Padam and Sidhu.

Masica (1993) also deals briefly with Panjabi and mentions some other writings on the subject.

References

1 Chapter 1 Panjabi Language, Scripts and Grammar: A Spatio-temporal Perspective

writings on the subject.

2 Chapter 2 Language as a Social Semiotic or Cultural Tool

clear what they can expect from the book.

3 Chapter 3 Panjabi Sounds and Script

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4 Chapter 4 Tone and Related Phenomena in Panjabi

to answer this question.

5 Chapter 5 Panjabi Grammar in Outline

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6 Chapter 6 Noun and Noun Phrase

in this ergative clause. Since this singular masculine noun does not

end in -É, its direct and oblique forms are homophonous.

7 Chapter 7 Adjective, Adjective Phrase, Adverb and Adverb Phrase

the related I-words, U-words, K-words and J-words in later chapters is

going to demonstrate this. This page intentionally left blank

8 Chapter 8 Postpositions and Postpositional Phrases in Panjabi

ESM (Location Event Structure Metaphor) by Dancygier and
Sweetser

(2014: 45) is involved. This metaphor is discussed in
Chapter 12.

9 Chapter 9 Verb and Verb Phrase

simply ignoring the facts that do not fit into these categories).

10 Chapter 10 Auxiliary Verbs and the Copula

chapters.

11 Chapter 11 Tense, Mood and Aspect

modern Indic languages including Panjabi. See 14.2.6.

12 Chapter 12 Case-marking and Verb-agreement

a grammarian firmly believing in studying language in
lokavyavahāra

(social behaviour of the people).

13 Chapter 13 Serial Verb Constructions

have said).

14 Chapter 14 Expanding Basic Clauses or Simple Sentences

processes are the subject of the next chapter.

15 Chapter 15 Compound and Complex Sentences

the particles in combination with intonation and other prosodic features

are used to organise discourse and give it particular nuances.

17 Chapter 17 A Little Bit of Derivational Morphology

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18 Chapter 18 On Shahmukhi

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Appendix 3 Panjabi Numbers and Expressions of Time

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2 2. Grammar and semantics

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Index of Grammatical Words

isrF hI nhIM&&&sgoM vI 310

sirf hÊ nahÊÎ... sagoÎ

so so 312

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